



SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Please amend the paragraph starting on page 2, line 8, to read as follows:

The machine according to one aspect of the invention is characterized by the feature of claim 1 wherein the ~~The~~ band is arranged between the fingers of a gripper, which upholds the band behind the rollers for receiving the stems. As a consequence, the gripper, after closure, can move away from the rollers, while the fingers and the band retain the stems without the stems falling out. It is now not necessary for the band to pass between the rollers while the bunch is being formed, because the loop in the band is in fact formed between the fingers.

Please amend the paragraph starting on page 4, line 23, in order to change the numeral "12" in line 28 to "10", as follows:

In the receiving position (shown in Fig. 1), rollers 10, at least when stems are being supplied, are in rotation (the sense of the rotation is indicated in Fig. 1 with arrows). Fingers 12 of gripper 11 are in an open position, in which the ends of the fingers including openings 18 are apart. Leaf springs 16 keep flexible band 14 under tension. Gripper 11 is so positioned relative to ~~rollers 12~~ rollers 10 that stems carried along by the rollers are pressed into band 14 between the ends of fingers 12. The stems are introduced between the rollers one by one, after which they are carried along by the rotation of rollers 10 whilst clamped between rollers 10, so that the stems are pressed into band 14 between the ends of fingers 12. Band 14 is pressed further between fingers 12 according as more stems are being supplied. Leaf springs 16 give way, so that an increasingly larger part of band 14 is situated between openings 18 between fingers 12 according as more stems are being pressed into gripper 11.